

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4471

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION - SEPT 2-8

REF: BEIRUT 4351 (DTG 020930Z SEP 77)

1. SUMMARY. SPECULATION IN BEIRUT CONTINUES THAT PHASE
III CHTAURA AGREEMENT, IMPLEMENTING CEASEFIRE IN SOUTH
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LEBANON AND WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIANS, WILL BEGIN SOON.
ON THE GROUND, ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENTS NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE.
FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS RETURNED FROM ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL
MEETING PLEASED THAT LEAGUE DID NOT DISCUSS LEBANON
EXCEPT TO APPROVE EXTENSION OF ADF MANDATE. BOMBINGS
AND OTHER MINOR INCIDENTS CONTINUE IN BEIRUT AND OTHER
PLACES IN LEBANON, AS GOVERNMENT MAKES EFFORTS TO

TIGHTEN LOCAL SECURITY. SHUF, WHERE INCIDENT TWO WEEKS AGO THREATENED TO LEAD TO SERIOUS CHRISTIAN-DRUZE VIOLENCE, HAS QUIETED DOWN. CHRISTIAN "LEBANESE FRONT" HAS BEEN ON POLITICAL DEFENSIVE SINCE ITS HARSH STATEMENT TWO WEEKS AGO. TALK OF A "BROAD NATIONAL FRONT" ON THE LEFT REVIVES AS WALID JUMBLATT'S PARTY AND PRO-SYRIAN BAATH PARTY ADOPT JOINT PLATFORM. NEW AUB PRESIDENT SAYS EAST BEIRUT SECTIONS OF UNIVERSITY WILL BE CLOSED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BEIRUT STOCK MARKET HAS REOPENED. A FEW CASES OF CHOLERA HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED IN LEBANON, BUT SITUATION IS UNDER CONTROL. GOL WEAKLY DENIES BRITISH NEWSPAPER REPORT OF NEW MASSIVE HASHISH TRADE. END SUMMARY.

2. SOUTH LEBANON. THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, SPECULATION CONTINUED IN POLITICAL CIRCLES, IN THE PLO AND THE PRESS THAT PHASE III OF CHTAURA AGREEMENT WOULD SOON BE IMPLEMENTED, FUELED BY OPTIMISTIC REMARKS BY PRESIDENT SARKIS, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS, AND PLO NUMBER 2 ABU IYAD. PRESS REPORTS CONTINUE TO STRESS ALLEGED ROLE OF U.S. IN ASSURING THAT ISRAELIS WILL NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWALS OR MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR PALESTINIANS TO WITHDRAW BY CONTINUING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS. LEBANESE NEWS AGENCIES SEPTEMBER 8, FOLLOWING MEETING OF PRESIDENT SARKIS, PRIME MINISTER HOSS, FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS, ARMY COMMANDER KHOURY
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AND ADF COMMANDER KHATIB, SAID GOL WAS SIMPLY AWAITING "ANSWERS AND CLARIFICATIONS FROM FOREIGN QUARTERS" ON ISRAELI ATTITUDE. OPTIMISM FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY REPORTS SEPTEMBER 7 OF VERY SUCCESSFUL OPENING OF LEBANESE ARMY RECRUITING CAMPAIGN IN SIDON. WE UNDERSTAND FROM PHALANGE SOURCES THAT SYRIAN GOVERNMENT IS LIKEWISE OPTIMISTIC THAT PHASE III WILL WORK.

3. PLO SAYS IT IS LEAVING SOUTH LEBANON. PLO NUMBER TWO ABU IYAD MET WITH LEFTIST LEBANESE REPRESENTATIVES SEPTEMBER 3 TO EXPLAIN PALESTINIAN POSITION ON CHTAURA AGREEMENT AND SAID PLO WILL BE COMPLETELY COOPERATIVE IN FACILITATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. IN INTERVIEW WITH ARABIC WEEKLY AL USBUA AL ARABI SEPTEMBER 4, ABU IYAD FURTHER EMPHASIZED PLO COOPERATION IN IMPLEMENTING ACCORD BY SAYING THAT EVERY SINGLE PALESTINIAN FIGHTER WHO CAME TO LEBANON SINCE APRIL 1975 HAS ALREADY LEFT, THAT SOME 2500 PALESTINIAN STUDENTS WHO JOINED PLO FIGHTING UNITS DURING THE WAR HAVE LEFT, AND THAT FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY IS FACILITATING PALESTINIAN DEPARTURES FROM LEBANON BY ISSUING RESIDENT VISAS AND WORK PERMITS. (FRG LATER DENIED THIS). KUWAITI PRESS SEPTEMBER 7

SAID THAT PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER KHALID AL-HASAN STATED THAT PLO HAS DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FORCES FROM ALL AREAS IN SOUTH LEBANON NOT PROVIDED FOR IN 1969 CAIRO ACCORD.

4. REPORTS OF PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWALS. AN-NAHAR SEPTEMBER 7 REPORTED THAT PLO HAS ACTUALLY ISSUED ORDERS TO BEGIN WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON. ACCORDING TO "THE MIDDLE EAST REPORTER," HOWEVER, DETAILS OF WITHDRAWALS WERE CENSORED OUT OF LOCAL PRESS. (BAGHDAD RADIO REPORT SEPTEMBER 7 QUOTED PALESTINIAN SOURCES TO EFFECT THAT NO SUCH ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN, AND WILL NOT BE GIVEN UNTIL LEBANESE ARMY IS PREPARED TO ENTER SOUTH LEBANON). DRUZE LEADER FAYCAL ARSLAN, ACCORDING TO BEIRUT CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESS SEPTEMBER 8, SAID PALESTINIANS HAVE IN FACT NOW WITHDRAWN FROM TOWN OF HASBAYA ON EDGE OF ARQOUB. ACCORDING TO ARSLAN, ALL PALESTINIAN OFFICES HAVE NOW BEEN CLOSED IN HASBAYA AND A MAJOR ROADBLOCK IN THE AREA HAS BEEN ABANDONED. WESTERN JOURNALIST SEPTEMBER 8 VISITED HASBAYA AND CONFIRMED COMPLETE ABSENCE OF PALESTINIANS, ALTHOUGH LEBANESE LEFTIST GROUPS WERE STILL IN AREA. BEIRUT PRESS SEPTEMBER 8 ALSO REPORTS THAT PALESTINIAN 155 HOWITZERS AT CHATEAU BEAUFORT HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN TO NABATIYEH.

5. FIGHTING CONTINUES IN SOUTH. SEPTEMBER 2 UPI REPORT OF ISRAELI RAID ON TWO LEBANESE VILLAGES, YAROUN AND MEIS AL JABAL, WAS REPEATED BY Wafa SEPTEMBER 3, BUT DENIED BY AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT WHO VISITED VILLAGE THE NEXT DAY. A BEIRUT NEWSPAPER, AS-SAFIR, SEPTEMBER 3 SAID ONE OF ITS CORRESPONDENTS WAS AMONG THE 30 PERSONS KIDNAPPED. ARTILLERY FIRING CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, INCLUDING PLO USE OF MORTARS AND ISRAELI USE OF 175 MM GUNS.

6. LEBANON AT ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS RETURNED FROM CAIRO SEPTEMBER 6, PLEASED THAT QUESTION OF SOUTH LEBANON HAD NOT BEEN FORMALLY DISCUSSED, AND THAT LEAGUE HAD AGREED TO EXTEND ADF MANDATE IN LEBANON FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS. ONLY DISCORDANT NOTE AT COUNCIL, FROM LOCAL LEBANESE PERSPECTIVE, WAS PLO ATTEMPT TO DISCUSS MEMORANDUM ACCUSING U.S. OF DELIVERING ISRAELI "MENACES" ON SOUTH LEBANON TO PLO IN BEIRUT (BEIRUT 4387 NOTAL). HOWEVER, EVEN Wafa SEPTEMBER 6 REPORT ON MEMORANDUM DID NOT MENTION ACCUSATION AGAINST USG. WHILE WELCOMING EXTENSION OF ADF MANDATE, LEBANESE IN CAIRO ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ALL ARAB LEAGUE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTRIES EXCEPT U.A.E. ARE BEHIND IN PAYING CONTRIBUTIONS
TO FINANCING OF ADF IN LEBANON, RESULTING IN PRESENT
DEFICIT OF \$114 MILLION. WHEREAS GOL WAS PLEASED THAT
SUBSTANTIVE LEBANESE QUESTIONS WERE NOT DISCUSSED AT
COUNCIL MEETING, SOME LEBANESE POLITICIANS THOUGHT
OTHERWISE, INCLUDING PIERRE GEMAYEL, WHO DENOUNCED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4471

ABSENCE OF ANY LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNING
"IRRESPONSIBLE PALESTINIAN ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON."

OTHER LEBANESE POLITICOS NOTED SOME DIFFERENCES AT COUNCIL BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND CAIRO, WHICH COULD WEAKEN ARAB NEGOTIATING STAND VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL.

7. FURTHER VIOLENCE IN LEBANON. A BOMB CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE AT OFFICES OF RIGHTIST NEWSPAPER AL
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ANWAR IN EAST BEIRUT SEPTEMBER 2 (BEIRUT 4369 NOTAL). A TIME BOMB EXPLODED IN A CAR ON CORNICHE MAZRAA ON SEPTEMBER 3, CAUSING NO CASUALTIES. A GUN BATTLE BETWEEN RIVAL STREET GROUPS, APPARENTLY WITHOUT PARTICULAR POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS, IN THE AS SHIAH AREA OF BEIRUT DURING THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 5-6 RESULTED IN TWO KILLED AND TWO WOUNDED. THE FOLLOWING MORNING THE RUMBLE RENEWED, WITH SEVERAL MORE PEOPLE WOUNDED, AND WAS ENDED ONLY WITH ADF INTERVENTION. IN ANOTHER INCIDENT, TWO PERSONS WERE ACCIDENTALLY KILLED BY RIFLE FIRE IN THE COURSE OF A MARRIAGE ON SEPTEMBER 6 IN THE VILLAGE OF BOUHAIRAT TOULA. INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES ANNOUNCED THAT TWO BOMBS HAD BEEN FOUND AND DEFUSED ON SEPTEMBER 6, ONE IN WEST BEIRUT AND ONE IN BAABDA. PHALANGIST RADIO SEPTEMBER 8 REPORTED THAT LEBANESE POLICE SEIZED A CAR CARRYING PHOSPHORUS BOMBS WITH TIMING DEVICES NEAR THE BARBIR HOSPITAL LATE SEPTEMBER 7. CAMILLE CHAMOUN SAID THAT RECENT BOMB INCIDENTS WERE AIMED AGAINST LEBANESE FRONT AND SYRIANS, AND WERE WORK OF AN ORGANIZED GROUP WHICH "WANTS TO DESTROY THE COUNTRY." HE SOUGHT TO LINK THE INCIDENTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO CONTROL ALLEGED SHIPMENTS OF WEAPONS TO THE PALESTINIANS FROM ABROAD. INTERIOR MINISTER SALMAN, AFTER A SEPTEMBER 7 CABINET MEETING, ANNOUNCED A CAMPAIGN TO COUNTER THE "WAVE OF TERRORISM," PRINCIPALLY BY STRENGTHENING POLICE AGENCIES.

8. THE SHUF. SYRIAN ADF TROOPS ARE HEAVILY PATROLING THE SHUF SINCE INCIDENTS OF TWO WEEKS AGO, WITH FIXED BAYONETS, ACCORDING TO EYE WITNESSES. SHEIKH AKL DRUZE SAID SEPTEMBER 3 THAT APPEALS FOR CALM IN REGION HAD HAD CONSIDERABLE EFFECT AND THAT NORMAL LIFE WAS RETURNING. DRUZE LEADERSHIP THEREFORE DECIDED TO CANCEL A SUMMIT MEETING. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE ONE UNCONFIRMED REPORT
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THAT CHRISTIAN ARMED ELEMENTS ARE INFILTRATING THE SHUF CONTINUOUSLY AND TAKING REPRISALS AGAINST DRUZES IN SECRETIVE FASHION.

9. EHDEN STATEMENT REVERBERATIONS. LEBANESE MOSLIMS CONTINUE TO REACT TO HARSH KFUR FRONT STATEMENT OF TWO WEEKS AGO. ISLAMIC GROUP SEPTEMBER 6 SAID IT "CLASHES WITH LEBANESE HOPES FOR THE RETURN OF UNITY AND COEXISTENCE IN PEACEFUL AND STABLE CONDITIONS," AND "REJECTED ATTEMPTS MADE BY SOME TO MAKE IT (THE ISLAMIC GROUP) A SCAPEGOAT AND TO PREVENT THE STATE FROM REGAINING ITS HEALTH AND POWER." THE GROUP NOTED THAT KFUR FRONT STATEMENT WAS NOT SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED BY ATTEMPTS MADE TO "CLARIFY" IT AFTERWARDS. CHAFIC WAZZAN STRESSED TO REPORTERS THAT MEETINGS OF ISLAMIC GROUP MEMBERS WITH LEBANESE FRONT MEMBERS WERE INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS, AND DID NOT REPRESENT THE GROUP AS SUCH.

10. THE BROAD NATIONAL FRONT AGAIN. JUMBLATTI NATIONAL MOVEMENT CENTRAL POLITICAL COUNCIL ISSUED STATEMENT SEPTEMBER 6 CALLING FOR FORMATION OF "A COMMITTEE FOR THE COORDINATION OF NATIONALIST EFFORTS," APPARENTLY LAUNCHING A NEW EFFORT TO FIND A BROADER FRONT OF LEBANON'S LEFTISTS AND MODERATES. AS SHARQ SEPTEMBER 2 REPORTED THAT WALID JUMBLATT AND PPS LEADER ASSEM KANSO WERE AGAIN IN CONTACT, AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT HAS APPARENTLY ALSO BEEN SEEKING TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH ISLAMIC GROUP MEMBERS. MOURABITOUN LEADER IBRAHIM KOLAILAT TOLD AS-SAFIR THAT THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT COUNCIL WAS REVISING ITS POLITICAL LINE TO DAPT TO CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS.

11. CHOLERA. GOL MINISTER OF HEALTH SHEAYTO ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 7 THAT THERE WERE ONLY THREE CONFIRMED CASES OF CHOLERA SO FAR IN LEBANON, WITH SIX OTHER CASES UNDER STUDY. HE SAID, IN CASE OF NEED, LEBANESE HOSPITAL FACILITIES COULD HANDLE AS MANY AS 1,000 CHOLERA CASES
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SIMULTANEOUSLY. EARLIER ON SEPTEMBER 5, THE MINISTRY ISSUED A PROHIBITION ON IMPORT OF FOOD STUFFS FROM SYRIA. GOL IS ISSUING TETRACYCLINE PILLS TO VISITORS FROM SYRIA, BUT IS NOT AT THIS TIME GOING FOR MASS IMMUNIZATIONS (BEIRUT 4445 NOTAL).

12. HASHISH. PURSUANT TO A LONDON TIMES STORY THAT "100,000 TONS" OF HASHISH WERE ABOUT TO BE SMUGGLED OUT OF LEBANON, GOL INTERIOR MINISTER SALMAN SEPTEMBER 7 SAID THE REPORT WAS "A GROSS EXAGGERATION." HE SAID HASHISH IN LEBANON WAS AN OLD PROBLEM, BUT THAT 4,000 KILOGRAMS OF HASHISH AND 34 KILOGRAMS OF HASHISH OIL HAD BEEN CONFISCATED BY GOL AUTHORITIES IN RECENT MONTHS. (TIMES STORY HAD SAID BEKAA FARMERS WOULD MAKE "\$900 MILLION ON THIS YEAR'S BUMPER HASHISH CROP, OR

\$100,000 FOR EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN THE REGION, MOST OF WHICH WOULD GO, HOWEVER, TO 20 PROMINENT FAMILIES."

13. BEIRUT STOCK MARKET. BEIRUT STOCK MARKET REOPENED SEPTEMBER 6 IN TEMPORARY QUARTERS IN THE BANK OF ROME BUILDING. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS VERY LITTLE ACTIVITY, THIS EVENT WAS WELCOMED AS ANOTHER SIGN THAT BEIRUT IS RETURNING TO NORMAL.

14. UNIVERSITY POLITICS. NEW AUB PRESIDENT HAROLD HOELSCHER AT PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 1 STATED FLATLY THAT EAST BEIRUT BRANCH OF AUB WAS STRICTLY TEMPORARY AND WOULD BE CLOSED AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMIT. HE SAID ASHRAFIYEH BRANCH DURING ACADEMIC YEAR 1976-1977 HAD ONLY 200 STUDENTS, AND IN COMING YEAR WOULD HAVE EVEN LESS. MEANWHILE, THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT THE MAIN AUB CAMPUS HAS GROWN FROM ABOUT 2,000 DURING THE WAR TO
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SOME 3,500 FOR THE COMING ACADEMIC YEAR, AND HE HOPES NUMBER WILL INCREASE TO 4,400 IN 1978-79. HE SAID REESTABLISHMENT OF STUDENT COUNCIL (A SOURCE OF STUDENT UNREST IN YEARS BEFORE WAR) "WOULD DEPEND UPON CIRCUMSTANCES." MINISTER OF EDUCATION ASSAAD RIZK SEPTEMBER 6 IN RESPONSE TO ACCUSATIONS THAT HE ATTEMPTED TO CLOSE SECTIONS OF UNIVERSITY OF LEBANON IN EAST BEIRUT, SAID THAT HE HAD OPERATED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PRESERVING ACADEMIC STANDARDS, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO POLITICAL QUESTIONS.
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